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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANTANANARIVO 000752

SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [MA](#)
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: ALL EYES ON ADDIS

REF: A. ANTAN 728
[1](#)B. PRETORIA 2098

Classified By: AMBASSADOR NIELS MARQUARDT FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The African Union will host a meeting of Madagascar's four vying political chiefs Nov 3-5 in Addis Ababa. The meeting has been touted alternately as a forum for getting the four chiefs' seal of approval on the provisional agreements made during the Oct 6 international contact group (ICG) meeting, or as a meeting to name all ministers and other institution heads, taking the Oct 6 agreements, particularly on Rajoelina as transition president, as faits accomplis. Given its unclear purpose and especially the continuing animosity between ousted President Ravalomanana and de facto leader "TGV" Rajoelina, odds are at best even for achieving a truly consensual resolution of Madagascar's political crisis in Addis. If an agreement of three entities, excluding Ravalomanana, emerges, the AU will likely push those entities to fill their allocated ministerial and other slots and deem the transition government formed. France is likely to accept such a government quickly, but much of the international community would (and should) react at best tepidly to such a disappointing outcome. Maximum pressure has been exerted on the four parties to consider further concessions to resolve this crisis. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) African Union Envoy Ablasse Ouedraogo convoked the diplomatic corps Oct 28 to discuss the planned meeting of Madagascar's four main political rivals Nov 3-5 in Addis. AU Chairman Jean Ping will lead the meeting, but UN and SADC Mediators Drame and Chissano will also participate. Country members of the international contact group (ICG) have not been invited. Ouedraogo explained that all four leaders -- de facto transition leader Andry Rajoelina, ousted President Ravalomanana, and former Presidents Ratsiraka and Zafy -- had agreed to go to Addis and that the purpose of the meeting was to name the ministers and heads of institution for the power-sharing transition government envisioned by the Maputo Accords signed in August. He said that the 28 ministerial seats would be divided five per movement with eight going to other political actors, civil society, and the armed forces. Ouedraogo argued that the question of who would hold the post of transition president was resolved in favor of Rajoelina, and thus would not be revisited in Addis. While in Madagascar, he made similar public assertions to the local

press, provoking a strong rebuke from Ravalomanana and his side. French Cooperation Minister Joyandet seemingly seconded this sentiment while speaking to the French National Assembly last week, stating inaccurately that "the international community confirmed Rajoelina" as president of the transition during the Oct 6 ICG. The Ravalomanana movement, however, still views the question of the presidency as open, while Ravalomanana himself -- in a recent international media blitz -- continues to assert that he will never accept "a putschist" as head of state. Ouedraogo asserted that AU Chairman Jean Ping is calling SADC leaders to ask them to tell Ravalomanana that he must cooperate in Addis.

13. (C) During the Oct 6 ICG, all delegations (with no chiefs present) agreed on a consensus prime minister. When next the question of the presidency rose to the fore, the leader of the Ravalomanana movement, Fetison, stated clearly that his movement was opposed to TGV retaining his position. Following further negotiations, Fetison agreed that his movement would accept TGV if he agreed not to run in the next presidential election. Fetison told the Ambassador in a private meeting Oct 29 that he had withdrawn this offer to the mediators after they were unable to secure agreement from TGV on Oct 6 that he wouldn't run, but that the mediators had announced his offer anyway during the plenary session. He alleged that he had gone beyond his instructions from Ravalomanana in making the offer in the first place. At the end of the ICG, it was decided that the AU would issue a communique noting the Ravalomanana delegation's strong objection to TGV's ability to run in the next election and that a meeting of the four chiefs themselves would be

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arranged to seek their seal of approval for the schema discussed at the ICG -- with TGV as president, Rakotovahiny as VP, and Mangalaza as PM. The chiefs would then name their allocated ministers and institution heads. Fetison expressed his concern to the Ambassador Oct 29 that the outcome of the negotiations in Addis was already predetermined, and asserted that in fact, the mediators had guaranteed Rajoelina that he would keep his position as president to convince him to go to prior negotiations in Maputo last August. The Ambassador noted that he had gone to Johannesburg on Oct 15 to see Ravalomanana with Ambassador Carter (ref B), impressing upon Fetison the urgency of finding a solution in Addis and the importance of compromise on all sides. He urged him as Ravalomanana's representative to focus on the elections and the future, rather than merely on the transition, which would be of short duration.

14. (C) The mediation appears divided over how to handle the prickly question of the presidency. While all mediators have been encouraging Ravalomanana to accept TGV, UN Mediator Drame and SADC Mediator Chissano seem to realize that the question is not resolved; however, the AU, which has taken ownership (and financial responsibility) of the Addis negotiations and will play the lead role there, may already have closed the book on this topic. During the Oct 28 briefing by Ouedraogo, representatives from Russia, the US, South Africa, Germany, the EU, Morocco, and the World Bank all questioned Ouedraogo's sweeping assertions that the issue had been decided consensually. Ouedraogo further argued, as had French Cooperation Minister Joyandet Oct 6, that if one of the four doesn't agree, they can decide to participate later per the Maputo Charter. However, the Charter states that "the political movements (the four named therein) will be invited to sign the charter (which they all did in August) and other movements can adhere to it later." It does not discuss the case of one of the four not agreeing to the staffing of the transition.

15. (C) In a meeting with Ambassador Marquardt on November 1, former President Albert Zafy presented a relatively optimistic reading of the situation, asserting that Rajoelina was beginning to understand the limits of his power and the

need for real consensus in the government, and that it was unlikely in any case that the minimum age for the presidency would be lowered to accommodate him in any 2010 bid. Zafy underlined the highly personal nature of the conflict between Ravalomanana and Rajoelina, but said he continues to believe that they will reach an agreement in Addis. He sees a clear roadmap moving forward, and is already focused on a new round of debate on constitutional reforms and the structure of Madagascar's government, followed by a referendum on the constitution for the "fourth republic" within the next six or seven months. Although his movement is the weakest of the four, he made clear his intention to keep parity among the movements' representation in the transition government, and did not seem to contemplate any concessions from his own side that might help Ravalomanana and Rajoelina find a workable balance. Zafy's main contribution in Addis may simply be that he has no real demands that weren't already addressed in the Maputo accords - but he also had little to offer to resolve the Ravalomanana/Rajoelina feud.

16. (C) The four movements agreed in the charter to work for a "neutral, inclusive, consensual" transition. Fetison argued to the Ambassador that a transition government led by Rajoelina could not be considered neutral and recommended that other names, such as retired ICJ Judge Raymond Ranjeva (the former foreign minister's highly respected brother), be considered. His movement would even be willing to accept someone from TGV's movement, just not TGV himself. Fetison confided that Ravalomanana was fixated on his personal dislike of Rajoelina and that this obsession had cost him ministerial posts in Maputo. The Ambassador said that it was up to the four chiefs to negotiate the issue; no one can negotiate in Ravalomanana's place if he fails to do so himself. He explained that the US would prefer to see a truly neutral figure lead the transition, but that it was not our prerogative to determine who that would be. That should have been clarified in Maputo, he said, but it was not. He

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added that we support the principle that the coup leaders should not be able to run in elections that they organize, and would be pleased with that outcome if achieved in Addis, but stressed again that Ravalomanana should negotiate these points himself. Fetison was unsure if Ravalomanana would in fact agree to accept TGV as transition head if he agreed not to run in the next election, but thought that Ravalomanana might go for such a compromise, as it would allow him to save face.

17. (C) Before Rajoelina and his delegation departed Antananarivo this morning, the Ambassador delivered a strong message to him, a bookend to the one delivered to Ravalomanana in Johannesburg, urging him to compromise further in Addis to avert failure. He stressed that saving AGOA and avoiding EU sanctions may be possible only if there is success in Addis in launching a truly consensual and inclusive transition. As examples of concessions TGV could make, the Ambassador asked TGV to consider stepping down from the transition presidency now in favor of a truly neutral third person, stating now his intention not to run in 2010 elections, and/or at least agreeing now to leave the presidency if he later decides to run. The message was received without comment. UN mediator Drame told the Ambassador on October 30 that he was sending the same message to TGV and that he had asked the French (Marechaux) to do likewise during his most recent transit through Paris; however, he was not sanguine on prospects for the French following suit. Drame also despaired in that conversation of the breakdown of teamwork among the mediators, confirming that Chissano and he had had no further contact with Ouedraogo since the Oct 6 ICG here.

18. (C) Comment: The underlying problem of Madagascar's political crisis has not changed -- Ravalomanana and Rajoelina hate each other -- and both need (at least minimally) to save face for any agreement to work.

Ravalomanana vows he will never accept TGV as transition head, but TGV is unlikely to agree to step down, particularly given the encouragement of the apparent French and AU endorsements. This issue will not easily be resolved in Addis and could block an agreement of all four. Ratsiraka has said previously that he will not go forward without Ravalomanana, but an agreement among Ratsiraka, Zafy, and Rajoelina excluding the ousted president (but maybe retaining part of his movement) may still be possible. Zafy himself said yesterday: "I do not know if this is all just a big bluff." The French would not hesitate to recognize such an agreement as a done deal, but it is unclear how the rest of the international community would react. During the Oct 6 ICG, the Addis summit was portrayed as "the last chance" to get all four on board before the train left the station. While the dip corps in general agrees that the transition should be blessed by Ravalomanana, patience is wearing thin. The 120-day EU clock for making a determination on hundreds of millions of dollars of critical aid for Madagascar ends Nov 6, and no one is eager to see that ax fall. With an AGOA decision following closely on its heels, the pressure to accept a deal coming out of Addis, even if not ideal, is mounting, both on the international community and on the Malagasy themselves. Post will continue to urge all sides to compromise, but the main action has now shifted from Tana to Addis. End comment.
MARQUARDT